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ABSTRACT

A survey of 130 secondary teachers determined their existing uses of mass media materials in the classroom, including newspapers, magazines, videotapes, computers, and video camcorders. Teachers also reported on their attitudes about the impact of the mass media on youth; their perceptions of students' interest in current events; the value and pleasures associated with watching television; the importance of using computers and new technologies; and young people's interest in celebrities, athletes, and musicians. Teachers were asked to define the phrase "media literacy" and were asked to assess the frequency of their colleagues using media for noneducational purposes, including to fill time, to keep students quiet, or to be used as a reward for good behavior. Results indicated that teachers are well aware of misuses of media in schools--85% indicated they had observed teachers use media resources in ways that may not be educational. Also, 75% of teachers have heard of the phrase "media literacy," but few define it according to the definition established by experts in the field. Most of the noneducational use of media resources identified in the study are tied to teachers' use of media texts as vehicles for delivering content. (Contains 4 tables of data and 11 references.) (NKA)

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The Uses (And Misuses) of Mass Media Resources In Secondary Schools

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Abstract

A survey of 130 teachers determined their existing uses of mass media materials in the classroom, including newspapers, magazines, videotapes, computers and video camcorders. Teachers also reported on their attitudes about the impact of the mass media on youth, their perceptions of students' interest in current events, the value and pleasures associated with watching television, the importance of using computers and new technologies, and young people's interest in celebrities, athletes and musicians. Teachers were asked to define the phrase, "media literacy," and were asked to assess the frequency of their colleagues using media for non-educational purposes, including to fill time, to keep students quiet, or as a reward for good behavior.

In the spring of 1997, the Chicago Public Schools faced public embarrassment when an eighth grade teacher screened the bloody R-rated horror film, "Scream" in the classroom, and on the same day, another teacher in the same school system showed the racy Hollywood film, "Striptease" to his fourth grade students (Newsweek, June 2, 1997). Such practices have "man bites dog" characteristics that garner brief media attention for the shock value of such events. But some teachers frequently engage in practices of using film, television and videotape materials in ways which, while not as blatant, are educationally problematic. These practices are so common that they have become normalized by routine practice in many public schools.

For example, in one middle school classroom, a teacher shows a videotape every Friday. According to the school's media specialist, the teacher lets students "vote" on the videotape they want to watch, and students even bring in rental videotapes of feature films to screen in the classroom. In another school, when parents complained to school administrators when an elementary school teacher showed children's cartoons (rented from the nearby video store) each week in the classroom, the superintendent defended the

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teacher, noting that, in particular, the *Frosty the Snowman* cartoon had educational value because students were studying about the weather.

The frequency and increasing visibility of these types of misuses of television and videotape in the classroom may sour parents and school administrators on the genuine educational value of television and video in learning. Children grow up in a culture where most of their information and entertainment comes through the mass media, and teachers can promote intellectual growth and critical thinking by using television and video materials wisely, and teachers can help students to gain media literacy skills by asking critical questions about media messages, comparing newspapers to TV news, analyzing documentaries in geography or science class, or studying television and film adaptations in literature class. But these types of practices might be misunderstood or unappreciated when large numbers of teachers are using videotapes or other mass media resources without such objectives.

This paper reports on specific knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of middle-school and secondary school teachers around their perceptions of the uses and misuses of television and other mass media tools in the classroom, the impact of media on youth, and their knowledge of media literacy education.

The Importance of Teacher Attitudes Towards the Mass Media

Teachers, like most Americans, have a love/hate relationship with the mass media. Teachers appreciate the instantaneous access to current events, the comfort of programming choices, the and the pleasures of using television to relax, they also have a number of important concerns about television and the rest of media culture. Many fear the ways in which celebrity culture have changed the kinds of role models for youth. Some are concerned about increasing materialism, or the representation of men and women in the media. Many bemoan the sensationalism that always seems to bombard viewers. Some are made anxious by the seemingly inherent passivity involved in using electronic media, or the propaganda embedded in newspapers, magazines, television programs and the internet. And while many teachers use videotape, newspapers, magazines, computers and video cameras in the classroom, many more do not.

Increasingly, in the United States as well as in many other English speaking nations, educators have been included media literacy activities into the context of the K - 12 language arts, social studies, health, vocational education or arts curriculum. Educators in these efforts have become increasingly organized, as evidenced by the recent National Media Literacy Conference, which attracted more than 500 educators to Los Angeles in 1995. Research on the attitudes and behaviors of teachers who engage in

media analysis, media production or computer and technology education reveals that these individuals have a pattern of attitudes towards the media, towards young people and towards their own role as educators that support their active involvement in an educational initiative like media literacy (Hobbs, in preparation).

But what about the teachers who are not involved in actively promoting the study of media in schools? What kinds of attitudes, beliefs and behaviors are present among teachers who may not have knowledge about how to engage students in critically analyzing media in schools? This research attempts to describe the kinds of knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that these teachers have about the intersections between media, education and young people.

At present, most staff development programs in media literacy are voluntary, attended by teachers who already have come to an appreciation about the importance of including media analysis and media production activities in school, teachers who already feel personally empowered to include these activities in their classrooms. We know very little about the media-related attitudes, behaviors and beliefs of teachers who do not engage in media literacy education, although a study of California social studies teachers revealed that fewer than one in five teachers included any study of the mass media in their curriculum (Wulfemeyer, 1990) and a survey of Maryland teachers revealed that teachers believe they lack the time to teach media analysis skills (Koziol, 1989). By understanding more about teacher attitudes towards the media, media literacy, youth and media culture, teacher education and staff development programs can be designed to more effectively reach all teachers.

Understanding Teachers' Current Uses of Media in Schools

Ever since the filmstrip, non-fiction and documentary programs have been widely used in American public schools. Most teachers use documentaries or other non-fiction materials as "enrichment"-- to enhance their coverage of subject areas, particularly language arts, social studies, history, science and geography (Weller and Burcham, 1990). While teachers recognize the power of the newspaper, newsmagazine and visual media as effective tools which aid the process of instruction they often view the presentation and format of school-sanctioned media messages as unproblematic, as Masterman (1985, 6) notes:

> [A] major problem facing those who wish to develop the study of the media in schools is that one of their fundamental assumptions-- that the media are signifying practices or symbolic systems which need to be actively read-- flies in the face of many people's common sense understanding of the media as largely

unproblematic purbeyors of experience

Simply using media in the classroom does not mean that teachers are helping the development of students' media literacy skills. When teachers use television programs to convey specific message content, this strategy can be highly effective in capturing student attention, motivating and informing students. However, such practices rarely develop critical analysis, reasoning or communication skills, unless those behaviors are explicitly modeled.

Entering the cultural world of the school, it is evident that many educators take for granted a wide range of educational practices which are so ordinary, so normal, that they are invisible and rarely questioned, including scheduling, public announcements and staffing patterns. When we examine the practices around teachers' use of mass media and audiovisual texts, a number of paradoxes emerge. Library media specialists have described teachers who order videotape, films or other media "by the hour," not caring particularly about the content of the programs, but eager to ensure that the materials will keep students occupied for a specific duration of time. In some school districts, the prevalence of this type of videotape use has led administrators to establish a policy that requires teachers to submit tapes they would like to screen to a board composed of parents and teachers, or to get approval from school administrators before screening (Hobbs, 1994).

Researchers have not yet well documented the kinds of instructional practices now common in K - 12 environments which optimize the educational power of video and other mass media and those which do not. The ease of videotape and other mass media resources may encourage its use as a crutch for those who cannot engage or motivate students in other ways. Through direct observation of classroom practice in two school districts over a three year period, the following teacher behaviors have been identified as representing some common uses of videotape and media materials that could be identified as "misuses."

1. Students view videotape with no opportunity to discuss, ask questions, pause or review material.

   While the invention of videotape has brought tremendous flexibility to the use of media in the classroom, many teachers do not make use of the remote control to pause the tape and discuss difficult or controversial segments, or to rewind and review segments. Such uses of video reflect both the casual and passive ways in which we use television in the home (Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) as well as the "transmission" model of education, where learning is understood as a process of sending information by those who know more to those who know less.

In some schools, passive viewing of videotape has become an institutionalized feature of the school environment. In one upper-middle class elementary school, teachers from four classroom send 80 plus children to the school library, where children sit on the floor in front of a large-screen TV. They watch for one half-hour or forty minutes whatever has been selected by one of the four teachers, in an additional duty which rotates among the teachers annually. Questions or discussion is simply not possible with a group this large, but "AV time" has become such a long-standing tradition that teachers are unwilling to give up the practice, which they see as harmless.

When television, video and other media are used with dynamic and vigorous interaction and engagement between students and teacher, significant learning experiences can result. For example, a collaboration between WNET and Texaco Teacher Training Institute for Science, Television and Technology involved training teachers in how to use television technology interactively in science classes. According to researcher Ruth Ann Burns, who examined the effectiveness of the program, when television is used interactively as a component of middle school science classes, students' "writing is more creative and descriptive, and [students] displayed more ingenuity and innovation on assignments, and they were more confident and enthusiastic in class" (Tech Trends, 1993, p 4). This program works because, in part, it identifies and models a range of instructional strategies which teachers can easily incorporate into their existing method of using videotape to delivery informational content.

2. Teacher mentally disengages while the TV is on in order to get "real work" done.

Before children even enter school many have acquired attitudes that watching TV is easier and less intellectually demanding than other classroom activities. Salomon (1983) has found that learning from television is directly linked to children's' amount of invested mental effort. When children believe that they will need to watch and listen carefully, they learn more from television.

In one observation, Mrs. Z. sat at the back of the science class to grade quizzes while students watched a physics program she taped off PBS some years ago. The teacher modeled behavior that sent a clear message to her students that the information in the program is not terribly important. With five classes a day, it is difficult for any teacher to stay attentive and focused through repeated screenings. No matter what exhortations a teacher may give to encourage students to pay

attention, her own lack of attention is the most important single message students receive

3 Teacher uses TV viewing to reward the class

Teachers use a wide variety of extrinsic motivational strategies in order to gain compliance in completing certain tasks, inspire high quality student performance, or keep order. When my son was in the second grade, he came home and reported that if the class earned 100 "points" through completing homework assignments and other good behavior, they would get to see *James and the Giant Peach* in class. Such practices reflect teachers' recognition that video is a highly attractive activity for students.

In one observation, when the VCR and monitor was wheeled into one fifth grade class at midmorning, the whole class erupted into a delighted cheer, replete with clapping, pounding feet and excited shouts. It was "movie day," the day after students' book reports were due. "It's just gotten to be a routine," explained Ms. T. "I promised the kids that if they all turned in their book reports on time, we'd watch a video the next day." The teachers explained that at first, she would stop in at the video rental store on her way to work and pick up a children's tape, but after a few months, her fifth graders began to anticipate the happy day and brought in their own selection of tapes, including "Home Alone 2", "Ren and Stimpy' and "The X Files."

Students receive a powerful indirect message students when television is used as a reward for good behavior: television viewing must be the most valuable thing the teacher can offer. Although teachers may not intentionally send this message, this instructional practice places reading and writing activities as the "hard work," a kind of suffering that students must endure in order to receive the "easy work," the delight of watching a videotape in class, and escaping for a time from the classroom routine.

4 Teacher uses media only to get students to pay attention to the subject matter

Teachers have known for years that film and television are effective tools in motivating and inspiring interest in a subject. Mr. M. has a collection of as many as one hundred short clips from popular movies, TV shows, ads and classic films. He uses them to illustrate various concepts in his business class. "I use the David Letterman clip where Dave enters the GE building to lead into my section of the course on relationships between workers and management," he notes with pride,

pulling a cassette from the shelf. And then when I teach about managerial leadership, I start with this clip from "High Noon," referring to the classic Western film.

Film and video clips have become a clever way for this teacher to get the television-generation to pay attention in class, at least for the introduction of new ideas. Mr. M notes that he discovered this method of teaching with video after feeling like his students were bored all the time. How could he get their attention? "The only thing they really seem to sit up for is something on a screen," notes Mr. M.

Using media to get students' attention is a common strategy used by teachers in American classrooms, and may not be a misuse of the media at all. As an instructional practice, however, it reflects teachers' belief that students cannot learn anything until they choose to allocate their attention to a set of processes, tasks or activities. But using video as an attentional hook may perpetuate the status quo function of media in American society-- as a tool which delivers eyeballs to the screen.

This method of using video accepts a problematic premise: that viewers are passive, bored, easily led and driven by their impulses to seek visual pleasure. If a teacher has such expectations about students, he may develop curriculum that is essentially persuasive or propagandistic, not seeking to engage students in wrestling with problems, encouraging critical analysis and inquiry.

5. Teacher uses video to keep kids quiet and under control

When a video is playing in the classroom, generally students are attentive and quiet. The capacity of video to sedate children has been recognized by parents since the 1970s. Mrs. S is a science teacher who works in a middle school with a population of students from poor and minority communities. She has responsibility for more than 150 children each day. After more than twenty five years of teaching, she feels deeply alienated from her students, and the school environment is a source of constant stress for her. "It's harder and harder to have an orderly classroom, since I have students with a wide range of emotional and behavioral problems, and all ability levels mixed together," she says. "Too many younger teachers have simply let their classrooms turn into wild jungles. These children tend to be much more disruptive now."

Mrs. S appreciates opportunities to "plug her kids in" with a science video she taped off the Discovery Channel, a "fun video" on Fridays, and all manner of TV programs at the holiday and end of school year

periods. In recent years, her collection of videotapes has grown, and she feels the kids are learning quite a bit from the programs because they are not the kinds of shows her students would see at home. Some members of the school staff in middle school avert their eyes as Mrs. S wheels the video cart into her room. Some of them suspect that she's a marginally competent, burned-out teacher whose grasp of science is slim and her ability to manage a classroom of hormonal 7th graders is almost non-existent. "This is a teacher who'd probably be lost without television, filmstrips, black-line masters or what have you," says a colleague in the building. The building principal knows only that Mrs. S's classes are quiet, with kids in neat rows and with plenty of "seatwork" to keep them occupied.

These misuses, generated through informal observation in classrooms and discussions with teachers, represent challenging terrain to explore through formal observations, data collection, and teacher interviews, because of the social desirability bias which limits the researcher's ability to get accurate information about day-to-day practice. Teachers may be reluctant to self-identify their own practices as "misuses," so it is important to examine a wider panoply of attitudes which may affect teachers' media use strategies in the classroom.

Research Methodology

A telephone survey was conducted in April of 1996 with 130 non-randomly selected teachers in grades 7-12. This research employed a convenience sample in order to collect information from teachers who were unlikely to have had any formal exposure to media literacy staff development experiences in order to gain information that would be useful in generating hypotheses about teachers' pre-existing attitudes about media literacy, media culture and youth, as well as self-reported behavior concerning the use of mass media resources in the classroom. A non-random sample of 130 teachers was obtained by inviting a sample of college students to conduct telephone interviews with two of their former high-school teachers, as part of an assignment on media research methods in a course taught by the author in the spring of 1996. Undergraduate students enrolled in a media research class identified two teachers to participate in the survey. Students were provided with an interview protocol and trained in the procedure for conducting the interview and recording the data.

The data was coded by two coders who read the completed protocols and entered the data into the computer. A sample of open-ended responses were coded by the author and the coder, and inter-coder reliability was found to be 91%, an acceptable level to establish agreement on the criteria for assigning the open-ended responses to specific categories.

Because of the demographic characteristics of the college students who participated in the project, we can assume that a majority of the teachers in this sample were employed at schools in middle-class to upper-middle class communities. The sample included only teachers working in middle schools or high schools. Seventy percent of the sample were public school teachers and 30% private school teachers. Females comprised 61% of the sample and 39% were male. Most of the teachers in this sample were veteran teachers, with an average of 17.8 years of service in teaching, although 25% of the sample were teachers with ten years of experience or less. The sample was evenly split between teachers working in smaller schools (with under 60 full time teachers) and those working in larger schools (with more than 60 full time teachers). While private school teachers are disproportionately represented in this sample, and teachers who work in poor, urban schools are under-represented, in age, gender and years of work experience these teachers typify the population of 1.3 million American high-school teachers in the United States.

Additional interviews were conducted by the author in two school districts, and through the use of the "media literacy listserve" (media-l@nmsu.edu) to identify the perspectives of teachers and media services professionals.

In the telephone interview, teachers were asked to indicate their attitudes towards specific statements regarding students and media using seven five-point Likert scale items. They were asked to rank order six statements regarding the most important problems facing American schools. They were asked to self-report how often they used various media (including newspapers, magazines, computers, videotape/TV/film, or camcorders) on a four-point frequency scale. If they had used one of these media during the current semester, they were asked to briefly describe an example of such usage.

Teachers were asked if they had heard of the phrase, "media literacy," and those who responded "yes" were asked how they would define it. They were asked if media literacy needed to be taught in school. Then they were asked if they had ever witnessed "non-educational" uses of media in schools, and asked to report the frequency of this on a four-point scale. Teachers were thanked for their participation and offered the opportunity to receive a copy of the completed research. The telephone interview lasted approximately ten minutes.

Main Findings

Teachers are well aware of misuses of media in schools

Eighty five percent (85%) of the teachers indicated that they had observed teachers "use videotapes, computers or camcorders for reasons that may not be truly educational, for example, using a videotape to fill time, to keep students quiet, at the end of the week or before vacations, or as a reward for good behavior." Fifty one percent (51%) of teachers indicated this practice was common or very common. (Mean = 2.5 on a 4 point scale, standard deviation = .86). Table 1 displays this data.

Interviews with media services professionals who work in public schools identify the problem of inappropriate use of video as the single most important problem they deal with on a daily basis. Frank Baker, a media specialist in the Orange County, Florida schools, explains via email:

> My concern is [with] copyright. The law says that if use of the material is for "entertainment" and not instructional, then it is a clear violation. This point must be made clearly to educators, including the principals or superintendents who want to side with the classroom teacher. Media specialists deal with this issue every day. I work very closely with them to educate them as to what is legal to use.

But many teachers aren't so comfortable with the clear demarcation of "education" from "entertainment." A number of teachers believe that the occasional use of entertainment media in the classroom for entertainment purposes is appropriate-- and that having fun can be an acceptable motive for using any communication tool in the classroom. These teachers point out how important it is for students to enjoy reading, for example, and point to patterns in group dynamics and bonding which emphasize the importance of shared, informal pleasures. Notes eighth grade teacher Molly Berger, via email:

> In no way do I want to sound as though I condone the misusing film or wasting time in schools. However, there are times when showing a film for fun is meant just as that. I'd hate to think that we are so task-oriented that we can't take time out once in a while to have fun as a group! This builds class morale which spills over into the just plain tough learning time. I don't condone those few (and they really are few) cases where a teacher constantly shows films and rarely teaches or use it as a baby-sitter. However, sometimes *Frosty* is just plain fun!"

Teacher discourse regarding the appropriate balance between using video and other media resources as part of the "work" or part of the "fun" can help create more reflective practice on the part of educators as well as help develop a school-wide or community-wide consensus about the range of

appropriate and less optimal strategies for using media in schools.

Teachers have heard of media literacy but have diverse understandings of its meaning

Seventy five percent (75%) of teachers have heard of the phrase "media literacy," but few teachers define it according to the definition established by experts in the field. Twenty four percent of the sample make reference to media literacy as the skill in accessing information, while 31% include reference to the idea of critically analyzing or evaluating media messages. Only one teacher in the sample included reference to the idea of learning to create media messages as part of the definition of being "media literate." Most teachers define media literacy as being able to comprehend messages from the mass media. Others identify media literacy as using media in the classroom as a teaching tool. A number of teachers define media literacy as having knowledge of media's effects on individuals. Media literacy is defined by exerts in the field as "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms" (Aufderheide, 1992), but this definition is clearly not yet a dominant and consensual understanding. Examples of statements that demonstrate teachers' identification of the access definition include:

> *Media literacy is the understanding of all technology and media that is available and how to use it effectively*

> *It's when somebody who knows all of the types of media that is available-- internet, computers, TV-- and how to use them in additional to available resources that do not involve media*

Examples of statements that demonstrate teachers' identification of the analysis definition of media literacy include:

> *It is the teaching of kinds to look critically at the media so they are not sucked in by its power*

> *It's understanding point of view and bias in dealing with the media*

A number of teachers define media literacy as the ability to apply information from the mass media to daily life. For example, one teacher said:

> *Media literacy is taking what is in the media, what it presents, and applying it to everyday life*

Others defined media literacy as knowledge about media effects on individual

and social behavior:

> *Media literacy is knowing how much media should influence your opinions and your perceptions of everyday life*

Still others understood media literacy as learning from the media, as in the response of this teacher:

> *Media literacy is when somebody refers to something in the media and you are knowledgeable for example, current events.*

Such wide diversity of responses is to be expected considering the informal ways in which teachers may have acquired an understanding of the phrase, including from popular news reports, on prior knowledge of the "critical viewing skills" education movement from the 1970's and 80's, and on simply inferring meaning from one's understanding of the concepts "media" and "literacy."

Teachers' use of media and technology resources in the classroom

Television, videotape and films are more frequently used as teaching tools than any other media resources, including newspaper articles, magazine articles, or computers in middle school and secondary level classrooms. Camcorders are still being used infrequently by teachers. Table 2 reports these results.

When asked to provide a personal example of their own recent use of media in the classroom, 84% of teachers complied, and several distinct categories of activities were evident. We coded each example provided by teachers and since some provided two or three examples, we had a total of 144 examples. Table 4 displays the categories of examples found.

Content delivery approaches were by far the most frequently referenced description provided by teachers, totaling more than 40% of responses. Teachers refer to specific media 'texts' as a strategy for conveying subject matter, information, illustration or ideas. Documentaries on World War II, cell biology, the Renaissance, National Geographic specials are examples of video resources described, while newspaper and magazine articles about technology, famous writers, and science were common as well.

Current events uses of media texts represented 11.8% of responses, including using Newsweek and the local newspaper weekly, giving students quizzes on current events, or requiring students to read something from a newspaper and summarize. Only a small number of these examples used non-print news resources, like CNN Newsroom or network television news; most examples

referred to local newspapers or newsmagazines.

"Read the book, watch the movie" approaches to using media in the classroom represented 10.4% of responses, where teachers use a film or videotape of a work of literature after students read the original work. From informal discussions with teachers, we know that this approach is used differently by teachers: some described this approach in ways that appear to focus on techniques of literary adaptation, using a cross-media comparison to examine characteristics of media form and genre. Others describe this approach as a tool to help weaker students participate in the discussion about the story, and still others describe it as a treat or reward after the "heavy" work of reading literature.

A number of examples provided by teachers involved ***the use of technology tools to create or analyze information.*** These examples, representing 15.9% of the examples, specifically referred to students creating a specially designed media message using computers or other technology tools. The use of graphing calculators, spreadsheets, and the internet were included in this category. A few examples involved assignments where students created messages using videotape. For example, one teacher described the making of a public service announcement in health class.

Only a small number of examples concerned the ***use of videotape to document student performance,*** comprising a little more than 6% of the sample of responses. Examples of this included videotaping student speeches, debates, experiments or plays. Approaches which noted the value of ***videotape or print media as a means to start discussion or stimulate student writing*** were infrequent, representing 6.2% of the sample. One teacher described the use of a particular popular TV program to generate rich student-initiated discussion about health issues related to alcoholism, for example, while another described the use of a New Yorker essay as a stimulus for discussion and writing. Some teachers described the ***use of videotape in teaching foreign language skills,*** particularly describing the use of foreign TV commercials and popular programs to provide "real-world" opportunities to build listening comprehension skills. Language skill examples comprised a little more than 4% of the sample of responses.

These examples suggest that teachers do make effective educational use of media as vehicles for delivering information content to students. While a number of teachers encourage students to use media and technology tools for communication, research, self-expression and problem-solving, these types of uses are far less ubiquitous. Perhaps the quality of the examples is an artifact of the telephone interview method, which may have encouraged teachers to give short, easily explainable examples instead of complex, more detailed

ones. More research is needed to further document the characteristic patterns of teachers' use of various media in classrooms, including ethnographic reports, diary methods, and observational studies. It is important to understand what contextual and other factors may cause content delivery approaches to be so common, and to explore why many of the other uses involving mass media resources are so infrequently described.

Teachers' attitudes about media and youth Teachers had the strongest consensus of agreement with the opinions that "Young people are influenced a lot by the messages they get from the media." (Mean = 4.6 on a 5 point scale, standard deviation .55) and the statement, "It's essential that students learn to use computers in high school (Mean = 4.5 on a 5 point scale, standard deviation .76)

Teachers had divergent opinions regarding the opinion that "Students pay more attention to celebrities, actors and actresses and musicians than they do to school subjects." (Mean = 3.6 on a 5 point scale, standard deviation 1.3)

Correlational analysis was used as a method to begin to understand the patterns of attitudes and behaviors which are associated with teachers who have various understandings and definitions of media literacy. In particular, we were interested in tentatively identifying how certain media use behaviors in the classroom and attitudes about media, youth, culture and technology were related to age and teaching experience. Our report of correlational data here is used in an exploratory fashion to develop tentative hypotheses about the relationship between certain patterns of attitudes. In particular, older teachers more likely to have heard of media literacy ($r = .18$), but were less likely to claim awareness of the non-educational uses of media in schools ($r = -.25$) Teachers who value technology tend to use a variety of mass media in the classroom. We found a moderate correlation between believing technology will impact education and believing media influences youth ($r = .25$) Teachers who believe technology will impact education are more likely to agree that ML needs to be taught ($r = .28$)

Teachers who perceive that their students are well-informed about current events tend to disagree with the idea that students judge everything by how entertaining it is ($r = -.25$), agree that students do a lot of critical thinking about the world around them ($r = .41$), and disagree with the idea that students pay more attention to celebrities than to school ($r = -.18$). Not surprisingly, these teachers are more likely than others to use a video camera in school ($r = .25$). These intercorrelations paint a portrait of one type of teacher, one who may be not fearful of technology, more respectful of students' capacities, and less dismissive of media culture than other teachers.

Teachers who agree with the statement that "TV viewing is a complete waste

of time" also tend to believe that students judge everything by how entertaining it is (r = .20) These people are slightly less likely to have heard of media literacy (r= -.21), slightly less likely to use videotape in the classroom frequently or occasionally (r= -.25), and were less likely to give an example of using media in classroom (r = -.21). These intercorrelations paint a picture of another type of teacher, one who is dismissive of students' interest in popular media, frustrated by students' boredom or alienation with school, and unlikely to alter his or her teaching methods to include newspapers, magazines, videotape, film or computers in the classroom.

Implications

Most of the non-educational uses of media resources identified in this paper are tied to teachers' use of media texts as vehicles for delivering content. As teachers have become increasingly comfortable in letting kids learn by viewing, it is easier to depend on this same strategy to calm students down when they're agitated, plug them in when there's no substitute teacher, or let the tape roll through the entire period, with no time for questions or discussion.

Using video for non-educational purposes has often been identified with elementary level education, when teachers use entertainment television as a "treat" for students on the day before vacation. This study demonstrates that non-educational uses of videotape and other mass media are common at the middle-school and secondary levels as well. In these settings, the use of videotape in secondary schools has eclipsed the use of newspapers and newspaper articles. However, while "content delivery" approaches are dominant, it is comforting to find a wide range of educational uses of mass media resources identified by teachers, including the use of media as a discussion or writing stimulus, as a tool in foreign language learning, and a vehicle for documenting student performance, or as a tool for creating messages or engaging in data analysis. Unfortunately, only a few teachers identify "media literacy" skills as including the ability to critically analyze a media message, for example, identifying a message's point of view, recognizing the techniques involved in constructing the message, noticing the economic and political context of the message, or using strategies for determining the message's authenticity and authority. It is essential that a coherent definition of media literacy be communicated to teachers, for this research indicates that while teachers think they understand what media literacy is, their understandings are ideosyncratic and diverse.

One important implication of this research is to recognize the dominance of "content delivery" approaches to using media in the classroom, which are the most consistent and well-entrenched educational practices of all the strategies for using media in schools. In order to encourage large numbers of teachers

to include media literacy activities in the classroom, including critical analysis of media texts and student-created media production activities, teacher-educators would be well-advised to build connections between media literacy instructional practices and the "content delivery" approaches to using media in schools. Such connections would encourage classroom change by modifying, extending and enhancing the existing practices of teacher behaviors. Embedding media literacy concepts and activities within existing uses of mass media resources in the classroom is likely to be more effective than encouraging teachers to adopt more challenging and unfamiliar classroom practices, media texts, and instructional approaches.

One recent example of a media literacy curriculum resource designed to build onto teachers' existing use of "content delivery" approaches is KNOW TV, created by the author in collaboration with The Learning Channel and Time Warrner Cable. Designed for teachers in grades 6 through 12, KNOW TV consists of a set of questions to use in analyzing the documentary, plus a series of activities for the classroom to help teachers better teach about analyzing media messages. The curriculum is intended to introduce teachers to some critical questions in media literacy to promote teachers' ability to integrate media literacy while using documentaries and non-fiction television in the classroom. Asking media literacy type questions about a documentary aids in strenthening critical analysis and reasoning skills and may improve comprehension of message content as well. A few of such questions include:

- What is the producer's purpose?
- How are images, sound and language used to shape the message?
- What techniques are used to attract audience attention?
- What techniques are used to enhance authority and authenticity?

Perhaps because documentary and non-fiction programs are perceived by teachers to be believable and trustworthy explain partly why the "content delivery" method is so dominant in the classroom. This, of course, is the best reason of all to subject these texts to the process of critical inquiry, to help teachers come to appreciate the critical media literacy concept that all messages are constructed products, made by individuals who have motives, purposes, and points of view. By examining the strategies which are employed by producers in the construction of a media message that viewers believe to be credible, viewers gain an appreciation for the "behind the scenes" choices made by producers in selecting and omitting information from a particular program.

The KNOW-TV curriculum was supported by The Learning Channel and Time Warner Cable, in a three-year collaboration that involved teachers and students in the development process. KNOW-TV was awarded the 1995 Golden Cable ACE Award for Excellence in Public Service Programming. The curriculum materials are available to teachers free from TheLearning Channel and are presented in a three-hour interactive workshop format where the classroom activities are described and modeled, giving teachers the opportunity to see how to integrate media literacy activities in the context of their existing curriculum.

KNOW TV was designed to provide teachers with tools to modify their traditional "content delivery" use of videotape resources by giving them a set of classroom activities that bring media literacy concepts into the instructional process of showing an educational videotape in the classroom . Because of the limited time available to provide staff development opportunities to teachers, it is important to design materials that can be effective for teachers who would be encountering media literacy concepts for the first time. KNOW TV was designed with sensitivity to the lessons provided by the literature on the diffusion of innovation, which suggest that any new activity or practice start by reaching those who are pre-disposed to experience success; that the innovation easily plug into existing practices; that it emphasize the relative advantages over the status quo; that it mimimize complexity; that it require little in the way of new resources; and that it be low risk to those who adopt it. (Basch, Eveland and Portnoy, 1986).

Increased efforts in staff development in secondary schools should be implemented to deter the non-educational use of video in classrooms as well as to teach a wider range of instructional strategies for using video, newspapers, magazines and computers in ways which promote students' ability to critically analyze the form and content of a media message as well as learning to create their own messages using computers, camcorders and other electronic tools of the information age.

TABLE 1
TEACHERS' AWARENESS OF THE
NON-EDUCATIONAL USE OF MEDIA IN SCHOOLS

"A few teachers probably use videotapes, computers or camcorders for reasons that may not be truly educational. For example, they may use a videotape to fill time, to keep students quiet, at the end of the week of before vacations, or as a reward for good behavior. Have you ever observed this?"

Yes	85%
No	15%

"In general, how common would you say this practice is in schools?"

	(n)	%
Very Common	14	11.5
Common	52	40
Not Common	63	36.9
Not at All Common	15	11.5

(mean 2.50, standard deviation .86)

TABLE 2
TEACHERS' DEFINITIONS OF MEDIA LITERACY

(N = 130)

Have heard of the phrase, "media literacy"	67%
How would you define media literacy? What is it?	
Definition includes "access" concept	24%
Definition includes "analysis" concept	31%
Definition includes "creation of messages" concept	7%
Does media literacy need to be taught in schools?	
YES	75%
NO	25%

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TABLE 3
TEACHERS' USE OF MASS MEDIA IN THE CLASSROOM

(N = 130)	Frequently-Sometimes	Occasionally- Not Often
Newspapers used	53%	47%
Magazines used	50%	50%
Videotape/film used	60%	40%
Computers used	48%	52%
Video camera used	17%	83%

TABLE 4
SELF-REPORTED EXAMPLES OF MEDIA USE IN SCHOOLS

"Can you give me an example of a recent situation where you used one of these media in your classroom-- newspapers, magazines, videotape, television or film, computers or a camcorder?"

Responses	(n)	%
Content Delivery	59	40.9
Current Events	17	11.8
Read Book/Watch Movie	15	10.4
Discussion Starter	9	6.2
Skills Drill	6	4.1
Tool to Create/Compute	14	15.9
Foreign Language Skills	6	4.1
Document Performances	9	6.2
TOTAL	(144)	(100)

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